

Introductory Lectures to a course
of Anatomy

Wm. E. Horner M.D.

1831



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INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

TO A

COURSE OF ANATOMY

IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

BY WILLIAM E. HORNER, M. D.

PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY.

DELIVERED, NOVEMBER 7th, 1831,

AND

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE MEDICAL CLASS.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY J. G. AUNER,

FOR THE CLASS.

1831.

I
Horner

DEAR SIR,

At a meeting of the Medical Class of the University of Pennsylvania, held this afternoon, we were appointed a Committee to solicit of you a copy of your Introductory Lecture for the purpose of publication.

We feel assured, that by complying with our request, you will gratify not only the present numerous class of your pupils, but all who have at any time been connected with the University of Pennsylvania, and feel an interest in the prosperity of that highly respectable and flourishing institution—all who can appreciate the exalted merits of your distinguished predecessors in the Chair of Anatomy, or would know the value of the names of Shippen, Wistar, Dorsey, and Physick, to the fame of our country.

With great respect,

Your obedient servants,

JOHN A. LOCKWOOD,
RANDELL CROFT,
JOHN C. SPAYD,

Committee.

WILLIAM E. HORNER, M. D.

Philadelphia, November 10th, 1831.

University of Pennsylvania, Nov. 12th, 1831.

GENTLEMEN,

In reply to your communication of the 10th inst. in behalf of the Medical Class, I have to state that a compliance with the wishes of the latter, to publish my Introductory Lecture to the course of Anatomy, affords me entire satisfaction. Desirous on all occasions of doing justice to the characters of my illustrious predecessors in the branch of instruction now committed to me, I am highly gratified in finding that the lecture alluded to, may contribute in some degree to this end.

I am very sincerely and respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM E. HORNER,
Professor of Anatomy.

To Messrs. JOHN A. LOCKWOOD,
RANDELL CROFT, and } *Committee, &c.*
JOHN C. SPAYD,



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INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

GENTLEMEN,

CALLED unexpectedly to the entire performance of the duties of a most important department of medical education in this school, and so immediately on the footsteps of an illustrious predecessor, whose course has been marked by a well-earned, singular, and unrivalled public approbation, and whose reputation has added lustre to the annals of his country, I am sensible of the difficulties and responsibilities of my position, and consequently of the necessity of a diligent and anxious application to its engagements. Though familiarized to them by fifteen years or more of labour, yet when my mind reverts to the names of Shippen, Wistar, Dorsey, Physick, professors of the same branch, and men whose understandings and talents have had extraordinary natural endowments; the recollection, however well it may be suited to excite my emulation, becomes also a cause of no small solicitude. Highly gifted as they all have been, and felicitous in the application of their knowledge to public instruction, they have left examples which all may honourably endeavour to imitate, but only a few can hope to rival.

In reflecting on the train of events which has brought me to this responsible station, and in comparing the humble beginning of the chair of anatomy with its present noble accommodations, and abundant resources of preparations and of subjects, it has occurred to me that it would be entertaining and instructive to us all, to inquire into the steps by which it has reached its actual eminence. To commemorate the labours of those who have laid the foundation of, and preceded us in an useful and successful enterprise, is

both a debt of gratitude to them, and a valuable lesson to others, and is perhaps at no time more salutary than when on the eve of a similar career ourselves, we desire to be regulated by those principles and motives of action, which have been so fruitful in good results. Almost every incident connected with them has an historical interest under such considerations—we are pleased to learn the manner of their education;—the degree of aptitude which in early life they may have exhibited for the subject of their subsequent renown; the actual phase or condition of society at the time, whether it was ripe for the reception of an improved state of things; and the moral and physical difficulties of the enterprise. A judgment upon events, modified by these circumstances, is the philosophy of history, the scale by which we may appreciate justly great men, and great enterprises, and attribute an exact degree of credit to each. From the incessantly progressive state of human knowledge, and the general improvement which is evidently occurring in the condition of society by the enlargement of the human mind, justice requires that the merit of each age should be estimated by its opportunities. The ball of Eolus of the ancients, and Papin's digester, are each deserving of our recollection, from being the early links in the series of experiments which finally led Watt to the construction of the steam-engine, and Fulton to the application of the latter to navigation; conceptions which have had such prodigious and unexpected results already, that no one pretends now to foretel their limits. With these preliminaries I proceed to the proposed discussion.

The foundation of the chair of anatomy in this school, was laid in the year 1762, by Dr. William Shippen, who then delivered a private course on anatomy to a class of twelve or fifteen students. These lectures were continued for three years, when, in 1765, Dr. John Morgan, having laid before the Trustees of the College of Philadelphia a plan for a medical school, was appointed forthwith Professor

of the Theory and Practice of Medicine. Dr. Shippen got an appointment almost immediately afterwards as Professor of Anatomy, Surgery, and Midwifery, and then lectured regularly every year, till his duties were interrupted in 1775 by the troubles of our revolutionary war. At this time his class was from thirty to forty. In 1778 he resumed his lectures, since which the course on anatomy has been annually delivered.

To appreciate the merit of this incipient enterprise of Dr. Shippen, and of its success, we must remember how scanty and scattered was the population of the British provinces of North America, how little intercourse the latter had with each other, and how few alliances with the province of Pennsylvania. We are also to remember the filial and hereditary veneration with which all looked to Great Britain, and the supposed impossibility of so elevated a science as medicine being taught here, in a rude and infant condition of society, with any degree of justness and efficiency. To these difficulties may be added the inveterate hostility with which all unimproved communities view the cultivation of anatomy by dissection. It is not our business at present to inquire whether this sentiment has a rational or a superstitious foundation, the fact equally remains in history, that mankind in all ages have felt it a sacrilege to violate in this way the bodies of the dead, and in their penal enactments have frequently placed it on a footing with the most atrocious crimes. Such then was the situation of Dr. Shippen in 1762, with the prejudices of the people strongly against his vocation, and laws equally discouraging, which, by their severe application, might at any time compromit his liberty and property. The persons of the present day can only form a very inadequate conception of the difficulties which surrounded him, but happily the man was suited to a task, than which few things, in the language of his biographer, Dr. Wistar, "require more knowledge of human nature, and greater powers of accommodation to the feelings of the heart."

Dr. Shippen seems to have been intended by nature to lay the corner-stone of the immense edifice of medicine, which has since been erected in this country. Aged twenty-six, at the period alluded to, uncommonly perfect in his form, and engaging in his aspect; his manners were those of a finished gentleman; his enunciation was fine; his temper invariably sprightly and good, could neither be excited by rancour, nor rendered sullen and morose by opposition. Dr. Wistar's account of him, states, that "in his intercourse with men he was perfectly at ease with the most stately—he could converse with the most ignorant so as to make them easy, but without affecting ignorance himself—and he could mix with the lowest orders in society without imposing a painful restraint upon them, while he preserved the manners of a well-bred gentleman. He was also particularly agreeable to young people."* Besides these personal accomplishments, Dr. Shippen had a hereditary claim on the acquaintance and good will of the inhabitants of this city. His great-grandfather, Edward Shippen, in consequence of a very pressing invitation from the first governor, Penn, had left Boston, the original place of his abode after sailing from England, and had associated his fortunes with the infant colony of Pennsylvania. His services had been most conspicuous and useful, for he had filled successively almost all the important offices of government, and had contributed greatly to the improvement of the city. Dr. Shippen's father had also been favourably known to the inhabitants as a practitioner of medicine.

To the personal advantages stated, and those of extensive hereditary friendship and family alliance, Dr. Shippen added foreign study; at that day all important in public estimation, from the want of opportunities of instruction here. While in London, he lived in the family of Mr. John Hunter, the celebrated surgeon, and followed the lectures of Dr. William

* Eulogium on William Shippen.

Hunter on anatomy and midwifery. He enjoyed the advantages of great intimacy with Sir John Pringle and Dr. Fothergill. To the incentive of such illustrious associations we may attribute much of the energy and determination, which marked his subsequent career.

Dr. Shippen arrived in Philadelphia from Europe in the spring of 1762, having completed his studies, and gained from his preceptors the reputation of great natural talents. Secure in such points as depended on himself, he gave in the autumn of the same year a public introductory to his first course of lectures. This was delivered in the State House in the presence of many of the most respectable citizens. He subsequently conducted his dissections in a small house on the back of the lot where the Bank of Pennsylvania now stands, and twelve students attended his course. Such, gentlemen, was the commencement, seventy years ago, of what we now see in a numerous assemblage of students from all parts of this country, and in accommodations for medical instruction of the most complete and extensive kind.

On Dr. Shippen's departure from London, Dr. Fothergill, the great physician of that metropolis, who had a strong attachment to the infant institutions of Philadelphia, manifested his regard in a substantial way, by presenting to the Pennsylvania Hospital two hundred guineas, and also a large collection of crayon drawings on anatomy and midwifery, supposed to have cost one hundred and fifty guineas more. These drawings were executed by Rimsdyke, a distinguished artist of London, from dissections made by Jentry, an anatomist, and were occasionally superintended by Dr. William Hunter, in their progress. They now, through the liberality of the Managers of the Hospital, make a part of our Anatomical Museum. Dr. Shippen was the bearer of the letter announcing this donation to the Hospital, and in it his proficiency and promise as an anatomist were delicately alluded to, with the view of expressing the inclination of the donor, that they should be used by him in the lectures on anatomy, which Dr.

Shippen meditated. With this stock on hand, assisted by such partial dissections, as the watchful jealousy of the people permitted him to perform, he conducted the first course.

Having thus started, it is not to be understood, that the lectures proceeded without occasional interruptions from popular indignation; for the city being small, almost every one knew what was going on in it. The house was frequently stoned, and the windows broken; and on one occasion Dr. Shippen's life was put into imminent danger. While engaged within, the populace assembled tumultuously around the house. His carriage fortunately was at the door, and the people supposing that he was in it, made their first attack there. The windows of the carriage being up, they were speedily demolished with stones, and a musket ball was shot through the body of the carriage; the coachman applied the whip to his horses, and only saved himself and his vehicle by a rapid retreat under a shower of missiles. The Doctor hearing the uproar, ascertained its cause, and extricated himself through a private alley.

As a public lecturer Dr. Shippen was unrivalled in this country, in the days of his strength. At the age of eighteen at a Public Commencement in Princeton, his natural talents in elocution produced so strong an impression on the celebrated preacher Whitfield, that he complimented him publicly, in declaring that he had never heard better speaking; and subsequently Whitfield urged it on him to devote himself to the pulpit. When this talent became disciplined and matured by age and experience, the testimony of his pupils who went abroad, concurred in assigning to him an equal rank with the most distinguished lecturers in Europe, and in affirming that there were very few who deserved a comparison with him. From information communicated, (for I never saw him,) his manner of lecturing was a mixture of strong and elevated powers of oratory, with pleasantries always exhilarating and never offensive. He abounded in delicate irony, which was so blended with good humour, that it

obtained unlimited power over his class, whereby he was able to censure pointedly and stigmatize an irregularity, without wounding the feelings of the author of it. Many anecdotes are still current of his happy tact in this way.

In regard to the course of instruction, it may be said that the opportunities for dissection at this period were too limited to permit either professor or pupil to penetrate into the minutiae of anatomy: and the concentration of three branches in the same individual; to wit, anatomy, surgery, and midwifery, as stated, was unfavourable to the full exercise of talents for either. Also the public mind continually in an inflammable state, created doubt whether the teaching of anatomy could be continued; hence the actual accommodations for demonstrating and dissecting were very insufficient, and the students themselves had to perform the part of resurrectionists. Under these circumstances we are not to be surprised if no memorial of the anatomy of these days, in the form of preparations be in existence, and if no foundation were laid of the Anatomical Museum as it now stands.

In the year 1792, Dr. Wistar became the associate of Dr. Shippen, after the latter had stood alone for thirty years, in his efforts to create a permanent anatomical interest. This union grew out of the existence from 1789 to 1792 of two medical schools; the most recent of which had its origin from feelings generated by the revolutionary war. One of these schools and the oldest belonged to the college of Philadelphia, and the other to the university of the State of Pennsylvania. Dr. Shippen was professor of anatomy in both. In the year 1789 Dr. Wistar had been appointed professor of chemistry in the college; but before accepting he hesitated much, lest by his acquiescence, the consolidation of the two institutions, which he had much at heart, should be delayed or prevented. During his deliberations it occurred to him, that he could be much more efficient as a professor in procuring this union, than as a private individual: he therefore accepted the place of chemist, and in three years afterwards, had the satisfaction of seeing his wishes realized, and of reflecting that he himself

had contributed largely, by his moderation and good management, to an arrangement which has since been so successful in developing the character and usefulness of the present institution.

Dr. Wistar, when quite a boy, had his prepossessions in favour of medicine awakened by the battle of Germantown. Restrained by his religious principles* from joining his countrymen in the sanguinary defence of their rights, every fibre in his body then as in the whole subsequent course of his life, vibrated to the calls of patriotism. He repaired to the scene of action, and in contributing his inexperienced attentions to the wounded soldier, was so much struck with the happy effects of the healing art, that from this moment he determined to study medicine. As a student he was distinguished by his zeal, his assiduity, and the promptitude and extent of his information. He graduated as Bachelor of Medicine in 1782, in the College of Philadelphia, and on his examination was subjected to a test of some difficulty. At that time the rival doctrines of spasm and of lentor, promulgated by the celebrated Cullen and Boerhaave, were set in array against each other by the members of the same faculty. As they each required explanations according to their own conceptions of what was right, our candidate had to vary in his answers, so as to suit the theory of the interrogator. This delicate task he executed with so much address and good sense, as to excite the strongest admiration on the part of the spectators. For in those days, gentlemen, the examinations were in public. From his own country, Dr. Wistar repaired to Great Britain. In Edinburgh, then the chief resort of Americans, he became highly distinguished for the same qualities which he had manifested at home. The associate of Sir James M'Intosh, who has since become one of the leading members of the British senate—of Mr. Emmet, since then one of the most powerful and eminent members of the New York bar—of Dr. Jeffray, now Professor of Anatomy

* He was born and educated in the Society of Friends.

in the University of Glasgow, Dr. Wistar wielded with great power the gauntlet of debate, and obtained for himself the high honour among such competitors, of being made, for two successive years, President of the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh. During his residence in Scotland, he seems to have attracted the marked attention of Dr. Cullen, for having presented certain written queries to Dr. C. on some medical subject connected with his theory, Dr. C. wrote a very polite note answering them, but stating at the same time, that it was not his habit to do such things, for if he should adopt it as a practice, it would subject him to endless trouble and inconvenience in answering the letters of persons who cared but little for his opinions, but in the case of Mr. Wistar, it would always give him pleasure to solve his doubts and to add to his information.

Dr. Wistar graduated as Doctor of Medicine in Edinburgh, in 1786, having written a Thesis entitled, *De Animo Demisso*. The chief objects of his studies were anatomy, surgery, and chemistry. As a student there, he left a name which was most affectionately and respectfully remembered for a long time afterwards, according to the testimony of the Americans who succeeded him.

Nature had not granted to Dr. W. that graceful and commanding exterior which she lavished on Dr. Shippen. His countenance, though not handsome, was benignant in the extreme; even strangers were struck with this. Many of his students remember the courteous and sprightly smile, with which he entered and departed from his lecture room. Extreme suavity of deportment on every occasion of life, was his predominant mode of conduct. As a teacher, he allured by his gentleness and affability, his students to flock around him on every occasion, and to ask him such questions as their want of information or misapprehension suggested. He was always on the alert to serve them in sickness, and to procure for them such places of profit and trust as his personal influence could controul, but invariably, I believe, on such

occasions, with a conscientious regard to his knowledge of their characters and to their qualifications. This principle of impartial, but merciful justice, always guided him in his decisions on the claims of candidates for medical degrees. Willing to attribute every deficiency to embarrassment, he only became convinced that it was ignorance, when every proper mode of inquiry repeatedly and leisurely tried, proved the incapacity of the candidate. In such cases his decisions were inflexible; as a conscientious man having a public trust of first rate importance, he never consented for any one to take a recognised appointment in the profession, with a smaller share of knowledge than what he conceived necessary to the practice of medicine. From the goodness of his heart, I have no doubt that on many such occasions, he felt more for the candidate than the candidate felt for himself. His justice was evidently so impartial, and his goodness so conspicuous, that I have never heard the slightest breath of censure cast upon his proceeding, either by the fortunate or the unfortunate; on the contrary, their admiration of him had received a new impulse. In his social intercourse he possessed unusual tact in communicating pleasure. Though gifted with unusual strength and cultivation of intellect, and possessing varied and immense resources of conversation, he, on every occasion, seemed more desirous to hear than to be heard. From this turn of mind, his conversation abounded in a remarkable degree, in questions; he culled information in that way from every source, and where he found a deficiency, he imparted abundantly of his own stock. Many young men, on first obtaining the pleasure of his acquaintance, were struck with this peculiarity—he inquired concerning the mountains, the rivers, the natural productions, the manners of the section of country to which they belonged, and listened with patient and obvious satisfaction to their answers. These interrogations not being expected, the person to whom they were addressed was not always prepared to answer them correctly. But if, through a desire of displaying more information than

he actually possessed, the unfortunate individual answered like one who was well acquainted with the subject, another well-timed and pertinent question, hinted to him that it was better for him to confess ignorance than to speak erroneously, for he was talking to one already acquainted with the subject of conversation. All this was done with so much delicacy, that pleasure instead of pain was excited, and I am sure, from my own feelings on returning home from such a discipline, that many persons must have resolved forthwith to make themselves well acquainted with objects so readily learned, and which, till then, it had never occurred to them, could become such interesting subjects of inquiry and of conversation. This happy tact made Dr. Wistar the charm of every circle. Unbounded in his hospitality, and fascinating in his manners, his house was the weekly resort of literary men of every description, both citizens and strangers: his company was courted equally by the young and the old, the gay and the sedate. It was very justly said of him, "if he addressed a promiscuous circle, he spoke like a man of the world, carefully avoiding every thing professional, technical, or in any way insulated; if an individual, he so suited his remarks to his taste and capacities, as to entice him into discourse, and draw from him his knowledge of the subject discussed."*

So deeply had his philanthropy affected his general deportment, that persons but just acquainted with him, were as fully persuaded of his disposition as those who had known him for years. In the sick room he was the ministering angel, compassionate, unwearied, prompt, and deeply-skilled; in bad cases never abandoning his patients, or ceasing to apply the resources of the art till life was extinct. In those terrible and unexpected accidents which sometimes come with overwhelming suddenness upon the practitioner of surgery, when even the stoutest and most collected hearts are paralyzed, Dr. Wistar, though on common occasions the

* Eulogium on Caspar Wistar, by Charles Caldwell, M. D.

most sensitive of mankind, found here all his faculties at their post. Whatever ingenuity could devise, and skill combine, was rapidly executed. He was not one who in witnessing the immensity of a calamity, forgot the means by which it could be repaired or averted. In extending the benefits of his skill, the pecuniary recompense for it was the last of his thoughts. He practised therefore on the most disinterested principles, and being possessed of a good fortune with a lucrative professorship, his charges were proverbially moderate, and such as they were, very difficult to obtain. In this, however, he did a disservice to the profession, which I am sure he never intended. Inconsiderable charges from a man of his reputation and extent of business, in forming a sort of rule in the profession, of course affected deeply such as were only beginning, and such as had not the other resources which he wielded. Indeed, society itself is scarcely benefited by such a proceeding, for it is generally admitted, that the most able members of the profession, have, for the most part, received the first impulse from the stimulus of necessity, encouraged with the hope of reward; but if the value of the latter be diminished much, it turns the minds of enterprising men from the pursuit, and renders those who are already in it, lukewarm; under which circumstances medicine loses much of its skill and respectability. No man however, entertained higher notions of the value of professional services than Dr. Wistar, and it was this very lofty conception of them which prevented him from estimating their worth in pounds, shillings, and pence.

Scrupulous and conscientious to an extreme in doing every thing for a patient which he thought could be of service, it is admitted that no other physician in the city encountered the same proportionate labour that he did. His efforts went much beyond those of a simple medical attendant. He felt the deepest personal interest for his patient, and not unfrequently afterwards his mind was filled with the strongest sentiments of friendship, founded principally on the benefits

which it had been his happiness to extend. In difficult chronic cases he made numerous and protracted visits, and entered into the most minute and comprehensive investigation of them. It was on such occasions that the solace and sympathy of friendship were superadded to the balm of the healing art, and that impressions of devoted affection to him are to be found among numbers of individuals yet alive in Philadelphia, who upon any one touching this string even gently, find it vibrate to the inmost recesses of their hearts, and in the crowd of recollections which the association excites, incapable of utterance, give vent to them in a flood of tears. To call this man good, is only to show the insufficiency of human language.

In a point of vast importance to the harmony of society and to the efficacy of Christian convictions, I consider him to have been a perfect model. The rule "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," was most indelibly and productively imprinted on his mind. Endowed by nature with a sensibility to be compared only with that of a delicate, youthful, and highly-refined female, it is not to be expected but that in our profession he received some rude shocks, enough so indeed to stagger a mind more coarsely organized than his own. Incapable of injustice and of rancour himself, when the first burst of indignation was over, which he owed to human nature, then came the sunshine of a calm and undisturbed conscience. Judging other men by himself, he trusted that there was some mistake, that it had not been intended, that the person had been betrayed into extremities by a vehement and uncontrollable disposition. If, however, a perseverance in injury proved that it was a deliberate and unrepented act of malice, no harsh retort came from his lips; they were closed forever upon the personal demerits of the individual, while he did ample justice to the merits, professional, or otherwise, which the person may have possessed. From this Christian charity, even many of his most intimate friends declare that they never heard him depart,

nor utter an unkind word against such as had flagrantly injured him. The sense of the injustice if retained in his memory, to the eyes of society was buried in oblivion. But if in his own justification it became necessary to expose the transaction, he did it in the least offensive terms, and in such a manner as to express regret rather than resentment. Repeatedly have I witnessed this trait in his character.

Dr. Wistar commenced the discharge of his duties as adjunct professor of anatomy in the little building in Fifth street, opposite the State-House Yard. It is now called the Health Office. The increasing celebrity of the school, producing a corresponding concourse of students, that house was insufficient to contain them. Accordingly, about the year 1807, a building was erected on the site of that in which we are now assembled. In the winter of 1808 the class met in it. Dr. Shippen, whose domestic misfortunes and bodily infirmities had borne heavily upon him for some years, had retired from the active duties of the chair. But on this occasion he delivered the introductory lecture, which was rendered more than usually interesting to him by his recollections of almost half a century, when but twelve students had assembled to follow his course, in an obscure room in the city. Now he had spacious and comparatively elegant accommodations, and an immense concourse of students from all parts of the union. In a few weeks after this effort of strength, in which he described in glowing terms his emotions, he was gathered to his fathers. This circumstance left Dr. Wistar sole professor of anatomy.

The talents which had borne him up to this period of life, were now applied with renewed vigour. Determined on discharging his duties to the best of his power, no pains, no expense, were spared. Well experienced in the best mode of instruction, in what was most useful to be learned, he sustained in the maturity of his reputation, the high opinion that had been formed of him. As a teacher of anatomy, differing in many respects from his illustrious predecessor, his elocution

was equally popular. Able, zealous, accomplished, with a great fund of solid information, with manners universally popular, his students who travelled abroad said of him, as had been said of Dr. Shippen, that no man they had met with was his superior, and very few his equals. His style of speaking was of that earnest and fluent kind, which, abounding in important truths, without restricting itself to the formal rules of oratory, commanded irresistibly the attention. It was not so much the speaker that spoke as the subject which he was discussing; the absorbing interest was in the latter.

I have said that probably owing to the uncertainty of conducting the course of anatomy in the early years of the school, no arrangements had been made for an anatomical museum. Dr. Wistar soon became sensible of this deficiency, and to the day of his death continued to supply it. Many years ago, he had made a very fine and numerous collection of dried preparations of the arterial and venous systems. The largest in our cabinet belong to that time. A considerable number of corroded preparations in wax were executed about the same period. About the year 1812, a friend of his travelling in Italy, enabled him to add to his cabinet, from the school of Mascagni, the best preparations of the superficial lymphatics which I have any where met with, not excepting the most approved in any part of Great Britain, Holland, or France, and I am assured by gentlemen who have travelled lately in Italy, that they saw none there superior, if so good. About the time of their arrival, an impulse was given to the cultivation of that branch of practical anatomy within our own walls among the students of the school, and from it has resulted a number of very creditable preparations. The most signal effort, however, of Dr. Wistar in this, line was having a number of very large models in wood executed by Rush, with the view of giving every member of his class an equal opportunity of learning. They consist in representations of the temporal bone—the labyrinth—the superior maxillary bone, the sphenoid bone, the brain,

and some other structures. A very large model of the wrist which he had ordered to be executed was suspended by his death, but since then it has been finished at the expense of Dr. Physick, and deposited in the museum. A very valuable collection of diseased bones was also made by Dr. Wistar.

The last year of Dr. Wistar's mortal career was marked by an unusual concourse of students, and by a series of lectures, in which he even exceeded his former reputation. In his fifty-eighth year, animated by a new and improved lecture room, but in an impaired state of health, his excessive fondness for the duties of the chair, still stimulated him to advance in the noble career. In this zenith of popularity, and of public confidence, in January, 1818, he was assailed with the malady destined by Providence to close his labours. So long as reason maintained her seat, an eye witness of his anguish, I heard him say, "Well, to-morrow I shall certainly be able to meet my class," and even when dark delirium threw her mantle over his faculties, his incoherent ravings were addressed to the same subject, and it was only by coercion that he was prevented one day, long after the usual hour of his lecture had expired, from repairing to the University. His death spread consternation and sorrow throughout this populous city.

The remaining part of this course went on heavily; the death of Dr. Wistar was not to be readily forgotten, or his place to be easily supplied. The distinguished talents of Dr. Dorsey, his years, the labour he was able to undergo, pointed him out as a fit person for this important trust. Possessed of talents of unusual versatility and strength, he was qualified by nature for the ingenious labours of the mechanician—for the sprightliness and wit of mixed society—for the acuteness and oratory of polemic discussions—for the research of the medical profession—and for the depth of philosophical inquiry. In the subsequent spring he was accordingly appointed professor of anatomy. Amiable, engaging, and accomplished, the good destinies of our country seemed

to have reserved him as a compensation for the loss of Wistar. At the opening of the course the next November, he gave an introductory, which, in the judgment and brilliancy of its composition, and in the effect of its delivery, realized fully the most sanguine expectations of the school, and of his friends. Scarcely, however, had he delivered it, when the hand of death fixed its unrelenting grasp upon him, and hurried him out of existence. Most appropriately may we say of him in the lines of the inspired bard—

Sed nox atra caput tristi circumvolat umbra.

* * * * Si qua fata aspera rumpas

Tu Marcellus eris. Manibus date lilia plenis

Purpureos spargam flores, animamque nepotis

His saltem accumulem donis, et fungar inani

Munere.*

In this succession of disaster after disaster, the only means of avoiding the evils which now began to hover around the chair of anatomy, and to threaten its existence as a distinguished and efficient department in our school, was the appointment of Dr. Physick to fill up the gap, and to respond to the public hopes. Already advanced in life, and elevated to the pinnacle of reputation, possessing amply the means of resting quietly under the shade of his own laurels, it was only after much hesitation that he consented to surrender his own convenience to the good of the institution, with which he was connected.

His early studies had been such as to qualify him eminently for the task. A favourite pupil of the celebrated John Hunter, having naturally very much the same character of mind, his predilection for anatomy and surgery had been fastened on him, and ripened into enthusiasm, by living under the same roof with that great man, and observing his

* Virgil. *Æneid.* Lib. 7—882.

most trifling actions. Mr. Hunter was so struck with the talents and devotion of Dr. Physick, that when the period of his study was coming to a close, he knew not how to part with him, and made offers, which, if they had been accepted by Dr. Physick, would have given to London its first surgeon, and deprived our country forever of the just pride she has in calling him her own son, and in having fostered his talents. That Dr. Physick was no ordinary student in Mr. Hunter's room, I am satisfied; when I was in London, in 1821, Sir Everard Home spoke to me in the most exalted terms of his merit; Sir Astley Cooper well recollected his appearance and deportment while they were fellow students; the Hunterian Museum still retained the specimens of his success and neatness as a practical anatomist; the conservator of the collection, Mr. Clift, bore testimony to the magnitude of reputation which he had acquired. These, gentlemen, were the recollections of thirty years. But the present value of his name I felt most advantageously, in the facility with which it opened to me, the most distinguished professional circles of the British metropolis.

As characteristic of the manner in which Dr. P. pursued his studies, I may mention an anecdote. He entered as a student in this city with the late Dr. Kuhn, who, devoted to the doctrine of Cullen, from having been educated at Edinburgh, believed that the First Lines of Cullen contained all the essential principles of the healing art. This opinion Dr. Kuhn inculcated on his students, Dr. P. taking for granted that it was correct, thought that as a medical student he could not do better than commit these First Lines to memory. He immediately set to work and fully accomplished the task, so that he could submit to an examination from any part of the book and repeat pages of it by heart. Mr. John Hunter as a surgeon and a very close investigator into morbid anatomy, held many of Dr. Cullen's opinions very cheaply, so that when Dr. P. got to London, he had to unlearn many things which

it had given him so much trouble to learn in this country; but even now physicians who consult with him in difficult and obscure cases of sickness, find his memory teeming with definitions, from this ancient recollection of Cullen.

At the death of Dr. Wistar, his widow by a noble act of munificence, at her own expense gave the anatomical collection of her husband to the University. With this foundation laid, and incentive to exertion, it has been my unceasing care to extend and to improve it, and this desire has been only strengthened and rendered still more active, by the fine accommodations of this building erected two years ago. A new and numerous class of wet preparations forming now the body of the Museum, has been made, and include a very large number of interesting specimens of morbid anatomy, and of minute structure. The variety of preparations illustrating almost every topic of a course of anatomy, is in fact so extensive, that it would be extremely difficult to introduce them all by demonstration; and it is confidently believed that in value and utility the Museum collectively yields to none of the same size in any part of the world, and that it is much superior in extent to any in this country.

I have now finished the subject, on which I proposed to address you; if it has failed to interest, and to reward you for the time consumed in its discussion, I trust that you will consider it the fault of the speaker; under more able management it could not fail to be rich in the best lessons of instruction for young men, who are about to engage in the profession of medicine. In whatever manner this topic may have been treated, the reflections on it have afforded me no small pleasure. Connected by strong ties of friendship and esteem to two of the gentlemen, who are now departed, connected by still stronger to him who is left, and who, I sincerely hope, may long continue to enjoy the fruits of a distinguished and useful life; I have traced their progress and their full blown character, as well for my own instruction as for

yours. In this sketch has been exhibited the mirror of professional history, by which every spectator may be taught what he ought to attempt. By it, every one within the sound of my voice, may be assured that the practice of the same virtues, will procure for him a suitable reward; and that the desponding cry of there being already too many persons in the profession, should be uttered only by him who has not the resolution to ascend its acclivities. The position is sure, that industry as a student, zeal, fidelity, upright and honourable conduct as a practitioner, will bring to every man of you, as he advances in life, a recompense much beyond what he now ventures to anticipate.

APPENDIX.

The following proceedings have occurred in connexion with the resignation of the Professorship of Anatomy by Dr. **PHYSICK**.

At a meeting of the Medical Faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, held October 17th, 1831, the following resolutions were adopted:—

Resolved, That the Medical Faculty have heard with the deepest regret of the resignation of Professor Physick, and the more so on account of the cause assigned for it—the increased infirmities of health.

Resolved, That having the highest sense of the value of his illustrious name to the interests of the Medical School, he be requested so far to retain a connexion with it, as to accept of the title of Emeritus Professor of Anatomy, and of the Presidency of the Faculty, with the privilege of voting on all questions coming before it—also of signing the Diplomas, and of Lecturing on Anatomy when he may be inclined.

Resolved, That a Committee of the Faculty be appointed to wait on Professor Physick with the above resolutions, and if he assent to the propositions contained in one of them, that an application be made to the Trustees at their next meeting, to confer on him the honorary distinctions suggested, as an inestimable favour to the Faculty.

Resolved, That in any event these resolutions be recorded in the Minutes of the Faculty, to transmit to future times an expression of the sentiments and feelings of the colleagues of Professor Physick, as well of affectionate attachment for him, as of the profound conviction which they entertain of the importance of his reputation to the school.

University of Pennsylvania.

At an adjourned meeting of the Trustees, held October 21st, 1831, the following report was made, and the resolution attached thereto adopted, with instructions to the Secretary to communicate a copy of the same to Professor Physick, and to the Medical Faculty, to wit:—

University of Pennsylvania, Oct. 21st, 1831.

The Committee to whom was referred on the 4th instant the resolutions of the Medical Faculty respecting the resignation of Professor Physick, fully coinciding with the views and feelings expressed by the Faculty, beg leave to recommend to the Board of Trustees the adoption of the following resolution:—

Resolved, That in consideration of the important services rendered to the Medical Department of the University by Professor Philip Syng Physick in the Chair of Surgery, as well as of Anatomy, during a period of twenty-six years, and for the purpose of continuing his connexion with the school, to the fame and usefulness of which he has so largely contributed, there be conferred on the said Philip Syng Physick the Honorary appointment of *Emeritus Professor of Surgery and Anatomy* in this University.

From the Minutes.

JAMES C. BIDDLE,
Secretary of the Trustees.

To the Medical Faculty.

At a meeting of the Medical Class of the University of Pennsylvania, held November 10th, 1831, Mr. Thomas F. Betton being called to the chair, the following resolutions, offered by Mr. Spayd, were unanimously adopted:—

Resolved, That we, duly appreciating the valued services of Professor Philip Syng Physick in the Chair of Anatomy in this University, sincerely regret the resignation by that distinguished individual of the active duties of his station.

Resolved, That a Committee of six be appointed to wait upon Dr. Physick to express to him these our feelings, and to transmit him a copy of these proceedings.

Resolved, That these resolutions be published in three of the daily papers of this city.

THOMAS F. BETTON, *Chairman*.

PAUL B. GODDARD, *Secretary*.

A copy of the above resolutions, enclosed in the subjoined letter, was accordingly handed to Dr. Physick by the Committee appointed.

University of Pennsylvania, Nov. 14th, 1831.

TO PROFESSOR PHILIP SYNG PHYSICK.

Respected Sir—The undersigned Committee beg leave to present to you the feelings of regret which the Class entertain at the circumstances which have made it necessary for you to absolve the ties which have so long subsisted between yourself and this institution.

It is with feelings of pride and gratification that we recur to the present flourishing condition of the University: a state of prosperity induced in a great degree by the untiring zeal and industry with which you have discharged the arduous duties of your professorship, as well as by the brilliancy and success which have marked your professional career.

The reputation and usefulness of our profession necessarily depend upon the character of its members: in contemplating yours, we can never want an incentive to emulation, and an example of the distinction and eminence which are ever the rewards of perseverance, industry, and application.

Whilst we deeply lament that increasing years should have admonished you of the necessity of retiring from the active duties of your station, we cannot but congratulate ourselves on the elevation of one, who, being educated under your auspices, is eminently qualified to sustain the exalted reputation which the school has acquired.

The enclosed resolutions are presented by the Class as a feeble tribute of respect to the genius which has conceived, and the talents which have executed so many improvements in our art.

That the same health so often distributed to others may be long enjoyed by yourself; that your earthly sun may long continue to shed its lustre on the medical horizon, till its departing rays give evidence that your spirit is wafted to that celestial home where the weary are at rest, is the fervent prayer of

Your affectionate pupils,

THOMAS F. BETTON, *of Philadelphia.*

MINTURN POST, *of New York.*

GEORGE N. KENNON, *of Virginia.*

JOHN C. SPAYD, *of Pennsylvania.*

STEPHEN D. M'NEIL, *of Louisiana.*

FRANCIS E. WEBB, *of Alabama.*

To which Dr. Physick returned the following answer:—

MESSRS. THOMAS F. BETTON, MINTURN POST, GEORGE N. KENNON, JOHN C. SPAYD, STEPHEN D. McNEIL, and FRANCIS E. WEBB.

Gentlemen—My separation from the active duties of the Professorship of Anatomy having been rendered necessary by infirm health, the affectionate address you have favoured me with is particularly gratifying.

I beg you to express to the Medical Class my most sincere thanks for it, and at the same time have the goodness to offer my warmest and best wishes for the prosperity and happiness of its members individually.

Most respectfully, I remain, Gentlemen,

Your affectionate friend and servant,

PHILIP S. PHYSICK.

Philadā. Nov. 16th, 1831.

Medical Institute, Philadelphia, November 3d, 1831.

DEAR SIR,

Having just heard of your promotion to the anatomical chair in the University of Pennsylvania, we have been appointed by the class to tender you their sincere congratulations. As to your qualifications, we deem it superfluous to speak, as they have long since been decided on by wiser and more competent judges. We have merely to say, that the rank which you hold, both in this country and Europe, as an anatomist, together with your unanimous election to so responsible and honourable an office, speaks language louder and stronger than any we can use.

The faithful and able manner in which you have hertofore discharged the duties of the office, while in the capacity of adjunct, confidently assures us, that you will continue to give universal satisfaction. That you may continue to give this satisfaction through a long series of years, and when you shall deem it necessary to retire, either from infirmity or old age, that you may, like your venerable and illustrious predecessor, withdraw, crowned with the honours which have been so profusely and justly lavished upon him, is the sincere wish of your very humble servants.

GEO. N. KENNON,
JAMES E. NOTT,
JAMES H. BRANDER,
BAYNHAM BAYLOR.

Committee.

TO DR. WILLIAM E. HORNER, *Professor of Anatomy
in the University of Pennsylvania.*

University of Pennsylvania, Nov. 3d, 1831.

GENTLEMEN,

I have received, with the liveliest pleasure, the congratulations and expression of sentiment of this date, on the part of your fellow students, which you were instructed to communicate. To have found myself, by an unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees inducted into the Professorship of Anatomy, and this measure sustained in the responsive feelings of the body, which will come most within its influence, is indeed, to realize beyond my expectation, desires of the nearest and dearest kind. I have always been convinced, that a public teacher ceases to be useful from the moment that

he ceases to enjoy the confidence of his class; without therefore expecting by any means, so large a share of the latter, as partialities perhaps under some excitation have induced you to express, I may be permitted to say, that I have invariably been directed by an ardent and anxious desire to discharge my duties according to the best of my abilities, and in acting upon this principle, I had no doubt, that a fair degree of credit would be attributed to it.

It is now, gentlemen, just twenty years since I entered, for the first time, both as a student and as a stranger from another state, the precincts of this venerable Institution; after the ordinary probation, I obtained its degree, and was, for a short period, in a military capacity, estranged from its walls. I subsequently returned to it, and under various circumstances of encouragement, have continued in it ever since. The honours and responsibilities which it has, within a few days confided to me, are additional proofs of the liberality of its policy, and that in erecting a School of Medicine for the whole United States, it has discarded every idea of the field of science being intersected by geographical boundaries and barriers. I mention these circumstances as incentives to yourselves and your associates; for though the line of promotion of so many cannot, from the constitution of things, be precisely the same with mine, yet the latter encourages me to believe, that patient and persevering attention to your duties will ultimately afford you severally, a recompense greater than you would probably pretend to claim.

Accept, gentlemen, my best wishes for the health and prosperity of yourselves and of your constituents.

I am very sincerely,
and affectionately yours,
W. E. HORNER.

TO MESSRS. KENNON, NOTT, BRANDER,
and BAYLOR, *Committee, &c.*

THE END.

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Horner
1831

